

THE
HUNTERIAN ORATION
IN
HONOUR OF SURGERY,

AND IN
MEMORY OF THOSE MEMBERS BY WHOSE LABOURS
ITS CELEBRITY HAS BEEN ADVANCED:

INSTITUTED BY THE EXECUTORS OF

JOHN HUNTER.

DELIVERED IN THE THEATRE OF THE COLLEGE, FEBRUARY 14, 1822,

And published at the Request of the Council,

By **SIR EVERARD HOME, BART. V.P.R.S. F.A.S.**

SERJEANT SURGEON TO THE KING;

PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE; SURGEON TO THE ROYAL HOSPITAL, CHELSEA;
SENIOR SURGEON TO ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL; HONORARY PROFESSOR TO THE ROYAL
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PROPRIETOR OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTION; MEMBER OF THE LINNÆAN SOCIETY,
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ROYAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE; MEMBER OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF SCIENCES IN
GOTTINGEN; MEMBER OF THE PHYSICO-MEDICAL SOCIETY OF ERLANG; HONORARY
MEMBER OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA; HONORARY MEMBER OF
THE ROYAL MEDICAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH; CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE
MEDICAL SOCIETY OF DUBLIN, AND OF THE FACULTY AT PARIS.

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A PLEADER TO THE NEEDER WHEN A READER.

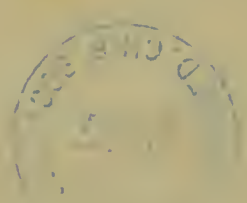
AS all, my friend, through wily knaves, full often suffer wrongs,
 Forget not, pray, when it you've read, to whom this book belongs.
 Than one Charles Clark, of Totham Hall, none to't a right hath better,
 A *right*, that same, more *read* than some in the lore of old *black-letter*.
 And as C. C. in *Essex* dwells—a shire at which all laugh—
 His books must, sure, less fit seem drest, if they're not bound in *calf*!
 Care take, my friend, this book you ne'er with grease or dirt besmear it;
 While none but awkward *puppies* will continue to "*dog's-eat*" it!
 And o'er my books when book-worms "*grub*," I'd have them understand,
 No marks the margins must de-face from any busy "*hand*!"
 Marks, as re-marks, in books of Clark's, when e'er some critie spy leaves,
 It always him so *wasp-ish* makes, though they're but on the *fly-leaves*!
 Yes, if so they're used, he'd not de-fer to *deal* a fate most meet—
 He'd have the soiler of his *quivers* do penance in a *sheet*!
 The Ettrick *Hogg*—ne'er deemed a *bore*—his candid mind revealing,
 Declares, to beg "*a copy*" now's a mere pre-text for stealing!
 So, as some knave to grant the loan of this my book may wish me,
 I thus my book-plate here display, lest some such "*fry*" should *dish* me!
 —But hold,—though I again declare with-holding I'll not *brook*,
 And "*a sea of trouble*" still shall take to bring book-worms "*to book*!"

— 1260.

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SIR,

PERMIT me, with my most humble and grateful duty, to lay at Your Majesty's feet the following Oration, spoken at a moment when my heart was filled with all thankfulness for the condescension and benevolence of Your Majesty towards the

Royal College of Surgeons, and the humble individual presiding over it ; as well as for the special mark of Royal Favour which Your Majesty was graciously pleased to confer upon them.

With all duty and humility,

Your Majesty's

Most devoted and obedient Servant,

EVERARD HOME.

GENTLEMEN,

BEFORE I proceed in the delivery of the Oration, I must perform a very pleasing task, which falls upon me as the Head of this College; and I am happy upon this occasion to see assembled so large a number of our members.

I am to acquaint you, that His Majesty has been most graciously pleased to bestow upon this College a special mark of Royal Favour, in granting a Supplementary Charter, by which we attain the Rank of other Learned and Royal Colleges.

By this Charter, among other privileges, the Head of this College will henceforward have the Title of President, the Two Governors that of Vice Presidents, and the Court of Assistants that of Council of the College. We are also allowed, at our Meetings, to have a Mace laid upon the table before the President, of which privilege we have now taken advantage, to give an additional honour to this day, as being the first on which this Charter is acted on. The King has been further graciously pleased to put his Royal Signature to this instrument out of the common course, that it might be ready for this occasion. It was yesterday promulgated to your Council; and I have now the honour of stating the heads of it to this

respectable assemblage of our members. I am proud to add, that in granting us this mark of Royal Favour, His Majesty declared, that such had been the improvement in Surgery, and such the increase of the reputation of this College, within the last twenty years, that there was no mark of distinction we had not deserved: and further, with that splendid munificence which so peculiarly adorns his character, His Majesty has been pleased to present to us a Mace, which, by the elegance of its workmanship, and the value of its materials, must ever continue the proudest ornament of the College.

THE

HUNTERIAN ORATION.

EIGHT years have now elapsed since the first institution of the Hunterian Oration, in honour of Surgery. Filling at that time the highly honourable office of Master of the College, I was appointed by the two Governors to give the first Oration.

If I felt gratified, in no common degree, at being the first individual appointed to perform a duty which must in future times prove so important to the fame of those able men who, by their labours, shall have

promoted the science and practice of Surgery; what must my feelings be now, called upon a second time to preside over the interests of this College, and a second time elected to this office.

When I last addressed the Members of the College upon this occasion, my mind was tremblingly alive to the difficulties which, from feeling strongly on the subject, I had to encounter.

I was to speak of a man nearly related to me; with whose thoughts, as well as actions, I was intimately acquainted; whose hours of exertion, and whose moments of relaxation, I had equally partaken; at whose side I had remained for years, from the rising of the Sun to the hour of midnight; from whom I had imbibed the first

rudiments of education, not only in my profession, but in philosophy, integrity, and that independence of mind, from which I was to derive support for the rest of my life. Of such a man it is not enough to say, that I looked up to him as a father. When I compared his exertions with those of other men, he appeared to be a superior being. From him I received an Inheritance, whose value was beyond what money could purchase; an education which has enabled me to rise in my profession without pecuniary aid, or ever feeling the want of such assistance. When I left him, thus educated, at our parting I acknowledged the obligation, and in strong terms (although we were then at variance) expressed my gratitude; nor has the lapse of nearly

thirty years materially blunted those feelings which, eight years ago, disabled me from expatiating upon the character of John Hunter.

To do that now is in no way necessary. Year after year I have had the heartfelt satisfaction of listening, in this Theatre, to the encomiums that have been bestowed upon him. The justness of the praise, the eloquence with which it has been adorned, the judgment with which it has been applied, and the liberality of sentiment in which it has been conveyed, has made me fully sensible of my own inability to emulate those eminent men, who have so highly distinguished themselves.

It is not in the praise alone which they have bestowed that I have considered the

chief merit of those Orators to consist : praise, having been well earned, *could*, by men of superior talents, be readily bestowed.

It is the correspondence of their actions, as Members of the Governing Council of this College, with their declarations in this Theatre, that calls forth my admiration. It is to their zeal and exertions that the Museum of the College, established on the Hunterian Collection, is indebted for its present state of aggrandizement, by additions of the most important kind : such, indeed, is the value of these additions, that it sheds a lustre over the Members of the College ; and exceeds what could have been expected from the liberal support of national munificence.

The constituted Authorities of this College did not receive from Government the charge of the Hunterian Collection with the lukewarm feelings of men who are merely honest; they did not say among themselves, we will preserve it entire; they did not, like the servant in the parable, adopt the contracted notion, of only keeping it unsullied. No! with the true spirit of professional ardour, they were desirous of doing justice to the Collection itself; of doing honour to the individual by whom it was formed; of showing themselves deserving of the trust committed to them; and raising the Science of Surgery to a height commensurate with their own reputation, and worthy of their country. They spared neither expense nor exertion,

intellectual or physical, till, by a continuance of unremitting labour, the specimens brought together in the Museum of the College, illustrative of Human, Comparative, and Morbid Anatomy, now form a Collection unrivalled in the World; and thereby render this College the school most amply provided with the materials for teaching the science as well as the practice of Surgery.

That such a man as John Hunter has risen among us, and that his pupils, for such I must consider the present Governing Council of the College, should have emulated, in so great a degree, the exertions of their master, is an honour to these realms, and a general blessing conferred upon the cause of Humanity at large.

Had I the eloquence and the power of oratory so often displayed in this Theatre, the hour appropriated for the present Oration would pass away before the first division of this Discourse was gone through; but to these I lay no claim : I have been too long engaged in the sober track of inductive philosophy, now to turn aside in search of the flowers of rhetoric.

This Oration is not confined in its subject : it is open to the merits of all who have promoted Chirurgical Science ; and one of our honorary members, lately deceased, has no common claim upon it.

The member to whom I allude was no other than the late Sir Joseph Banks, who was not only an honour to our College, but one of the most distinguished of the

Sons of Science in Europe. He was not in himself a genius who, by his discoveries, astonished and enlightened mankind; but he was one who, in his early youth, without a guide, discovered the path that led to Science, and from that moment never deviated from it till the end of his life. In the cause of knowledge he occupied his time, employed his fortune, and on all occasions put his health and his life to the hazard, whenever by so doing this great object could be obtained.

He was the son of William Banks, of Revesby Abbey in Lincolnshire; was born in London on the 13th of February 1743, so that his anniversary precedes, by a few hours, that of John Hunter, which we are now celebrating.

The first part of his education was under a private tutor ; at nine years of age he was sent to Harrow School, and was removed, when thirteen, to Eton. He is described, in a letter from his tutor, as being well-disposed and good-tempered, but so immoderately fond of play, that his attention could not be fixed to study. When fourteen, his tutor had, for the first time, the satisfaction of finding him reading during his hours of leisure. This sudden turn, which his mind had taken, Sir Joseph explained to me in the following manner : One fine Summer evening he had bathed in the river as usual with other boys, but having staid a long time in the water, he found, when he came to dress himself, that all his companions were gone :

he was walking leisurely along a lane, the sides of which were richly enamelled with flowers ; he stopped, and looking round, involuntarily exclaimed, How beautiful ! After some reflection, he said to himself, it is surely more natural that I should be taught to know all these productions of Nature, in preference to Greek and Latin ; but the latter is my father's command, and it is my duty to obey him ; I will, however, make myself acquainted with all these different plants for my own pleasure and gratification. He began immediately to teach himself Botany ; and, for want of more able tutors, submitted to be instructed by the women employed in culling simples, as it is termed, to supply the Druggists and Apothecaries shops, paying sixpence

for every material piece of information. While at home for the ensuing holidays, he found, to his inexpressible delight, in his mother's dressing-room, a book, in which all the plants he had met with were not only described, but represented by engravings. This, which proved to be Gerrard's Herbal, although one of the boards was lost, and several of the leaves torn out, he carried with him to school in triumph ; and it was probably this very book that he was poring over when detected by his tutor, for the first time, in the act of reading.

He now exulted over his former preceptors, being not only independent of them, but in his turn, whenever they met with a new plant, told them

its name, and the qualities ascribed to it.

By some I may be blamed for having dwelt so long upon what may be considered a trifling circumstance; it will, however, appear much otherwise to that part of my audience who have been employed in tracing the progress and development of the human intellect. They will be pleased to find that I had received, from Sir Joseph Banks's own mouth, an account of the origin of that strong bent which his mind took for those studies and pursuits which afterwards formed the business and delight of his life, and on which his reputation has been established.

He left Eton school in his eighteenth year, and may be said to have lost

the last half year of his education there, having been taken home to be innoculated for the Small Pox, by the Suttons, which required fourteen days preparation; and the failure of the first attempt so protracted the time, that when he had completely recovered, he was considered old enough to go to Oxford. He was accordingly entered a Gentleman Commoner at Christ Church, in December 1760, just before he was eighteen, but less forward in Greek than his cotemporaries.

If his love of Botany commenced at school, it increased at the University, and there his mind warmly embraced all the other branches of Natural History. His ardor for the acquirement of Botanical knowledge was so great, that finding no

lectures were given in that branch of science, he applied to the professor for permission to procure a proper person, whose remuneration was to fall entirely upon the Students who formed his class. This arrangement was acceded to, and a sufficient number of students having set down their names, he went immediately in the Stage Coach to Cambridge, and brought back with him Mr. Israel Lyons, a Botanist and Astronomer. This Gentleman, many years subsequent, procured, through Mr. Banks's interest, the appointment of Astronomer to the Voyage towards the North Pole, under Captain Phipps, afterwards Lord Mulgrave.

Mr. Banks soon made himself conspicuous, through the whole University, by

his superior knowledge in Natural History. He once told me in conversation, that when he first went to Oxford, if he happened to come into any party of Students in which they were discussing questions respecting Greek Authors, some of them would call out, Here is Banks, but he knows nothing of Greek; to this rebuke he made no reply, but said to himself, I will very soon excel you all in another kind of knowledge, in my mind of infinitely greater importance; and not long after, when any of them wanted to clear up a point in Natural History, they said, We must go to Banks.

He left Oxford in December 1763, after having taken an honorary degree. In February 1764 he came of age, and, as his

father died in 1761, he also came to the possession of his paternal fortune. In May 1766 he was chosen into the Royal Society, and in the Summer, went to Newfoundland with his friend Mr. Phipps, Lieutenant in the Navy, who afterwards made a voyage towards the North Pole. Early in the voyage it blew a gale, which made him dreadfully sea sick, and unable to keep his legs upon deck ; determined not to go below, he made himself fast to a gun, by means of ropes knotted and twisted in all the different ways he could contrive. In this situation he was making the most solemn vows, that nothing should ever again tempt him to go to sea ; these were interrupted by the mizen-topmast coming rattling down in the shrowds, immediately over his head ;

this sudden alarm put a stop to the sea sickness, his mind being wholly occupied in disengaging himself, and trying to escape from the impending danger. The object of this voyage was collecting plants. He returned to England the following Winter by way of Lisbon.

It was after his return, that the intimacy took place between him and Dr. Solander, who was then employed as an Assistant Librarian in the British Museum.

In 1768 Mr. Banks accompanied Captain Cook in his voyage round the world, and took Dr. Solander with him. In private conversation, respecting circumstances that occurred during that voyage, he mentioned several not noticed in the account laid before the public.

While navigating in narrow seas, surrounded by coral rocks, the ship was often in imminent danger of striking, and upon one particular occasion actually struck, and remained immoveable, as is related in the printed account of the voyage: at the same time she sprung a leak, which gained so fast, notwithstanding every effort by means of the pumps, that Mr. Banks, as well as every other person, was obliged to take his spell, “ and though by the gaining of the leak upon the pumps there was no less than three feet nine inches water in the hold, yet the men did not relinquish their labour, and by increased exertion, as it were, held the water at bay; but having now endured excessive fatigue of body, and agitation of mind, for more than twenty-

four hours, and having but little hope of succeeding, at last they began to flag; they could not work at the pump more than five or six minutes together, and then, being totally exhausted, they threw themselves down upon the deck, though a stream of water was running over it from the pumps between three and four inches deep; when those who succeeded them had worked their spell, and were exhausted in their turn, they threw themselves down in the same manner, and the others started up again and renewed their labour; thus relieving each other, till an accident was very nearly putting an end to their efforts at once. The planking which lines the inside of the ship's bottom is called the ceiling, and between this and the outside planking

there is a space of about 18 inches ; the man who had till this time attended the well, to take the depth of water, had only taken it to the ceiling, and sung out the measure accordingly ; but he being now relieved, the person who came in his stead, calculated his measurement from the outside planking, by which it was made to appear that in a few minutes the leak had gained upon the pumps 18 inches." At this time, Sir Joseph told me, worn out with fatigue, he was lying fast asleep, and such a sleep must be considered as of the soundest kind, but when he heard the man heaving the lead sing out, " Five feet three inches in the hold," it immediately awoke him, although no loud noise, not even the firing of cannon, could have produced that

effect. He mentioned also an instance of no common presence of mind, which occurred on one of the islands of the South Seas, which I do not meet with in the account which is published of the voyage. Captain Cook, Mr. Banks, and Dr. Solander, landed with a party of marines ; they were all three armed with muskets : the natives came down from a hill, in considerable force, armed with spears ; they never had seen Europeans before, and halted at a considerable distance. The marines were drawn up on the beach, and Captain Cook with his friends advanced, carrying emblems of peace in their hands ; when the natives saw that they were at a sufficient distance from the party on the beach, they rushed forward, and the marines prepared

to fire, but Captain Cook beckoned to them to desist. Four of the Chiefs sprung upon them, separated them from one another, pinioned them completely, by twisting their arms within those of their prisoners, and in this order began to march them up to the hill; Mr. Banks requested that no resistance should be made till they attempted seizing their muskets. After having proceeded some way, all at once, as if ashamed of the cowardice of the transaction, they wheeled round, and ran with them back to the place where they first laid hands upon them, and disengaged their arms with so much velocity, as well as force, that they spun round before they could recover their feet. The Chiefs went back to their party, and came on, brandish-

ing their spears, to offer battle. The marines now fired over their heads, which astonished, but did not intimidate them ; and it was necessary to fire a volley of small shot among them, to stop their progress. On finding several of their party wounded, they were struck with a general panic, and in a moment disappeared.

Next morning an old man came with a woman, having some of the shot in his hand extracted from a wound his brother had received ; he made signs, to know whether the wounded man would recover ; and upon being made to understand that he certainly would, they immediately appeared cheerful, and went away delighted with the news they had received. Soon after they brought provisions ; and from

that time the most friendly and confidential intercourse was carried on with the natives of the island.

After all the privations suffered in this voyage, and the dangers that were gone through, it required an uncommon strength of mind a second time to offer to encounter them : Mr. Banks did however (at the solicitation of Lord Sandwich, then First Lord of the Admiralty) make this offer to Government, which was accepted ; and such was the expence of his outfit, and so extensive the preparations he made, that he was obliged to raise money for that purpose. He engaged Zoffany the painter, three draftsmen, two secretaries, nine servants, initiated in the art of preparing Animals and Plants ; but finding himself

thwarted by the Comptroller of the Navy, in every thing he proposed respecting the accommodations in the ships, he gave up, in disgust, all idea of going upon a voyage, in the outset of which he had received such personal ill treatment.

It was highly honourable to Mr. Banks, that although he relinquished the voyage, he exerted himself in every way in his power to promote the objects of it.

Dr. James Lind, a very able physician, had received the appointment of Naturalist, with a grant from Parliament of 4,000*l*. This gentleman, upon Mr. Banks not going, declined the offer, and Dr. John Reynolds Forster and his son, through Mr. Banks, received it. Upon Dr. Forster's return, his drawings were purchased by Mr. Banks,

and have a place in his invaluable library.

In expectation of being engaged in another voyage of discovery, although not in a King's Ship, Mr. Banks, with a view to keep his followers together, made a voyage to Iceland, with his friend Dr. Solander. He arrived there in August 1772, and returned in six weeks.

In the year 1778 he was elected President of The Royal Society; and continued, as is well known, to preside over that scientific body till his death.

From the time of this appointment he gave up all idea of leaving his country, and began to prepare for publication the rich store of materials in Botany which he had collected. In March 1779 he married

Dorothea, daughter of William Western Hugessen, of Provender in Kent. In 1781 he was created a Baronet.

In 1782 he lost his friend and fellow labourer Dr. Solander, who died of an apoplectic fit. This loss was a severe blow; and in consequence of it he gave up all intention of proceeding with his Botanical work, or of ever becoming an Author, further than occasional communications connected with Botany.

He was invested with the Order of the Bath in 1795, and in 1797 sworn into the Privy Council. In 1802 he was chosen a Member of the National Institute of France.

That one whose whole life was spent in investigating the habits of Animals and

Plants, and whose mind was more richly stored than that of almost any other man with facts and observations respecting them, should have left no publications of any extent behind him, is a source of regret.

From the history I have given of this our late brother's pursuits, however imperfectly it has been drawn up, there is surely no one belonging to this College that does not feel an inward pride that such a man was a member of our body.

That one born to independence, should have shewn, even in his boyish days, a natural propensity to the study of Anatomy and Phisiology, must be highly gratifying to us, who cannot, without being deeply versed in those studies, be fitted for the

duties of our profession. It is true that it was neither Human nor Comparative Anatomy, by which his young mind was attracted; they were not within his reach; it was the Anatomy and Phisiology of Plants, which could not be kept from his view.

We, more than other men, can estimate the sagacity of the choice he made, since we have felt in a higher degree, than other men can, the gratification which the mind receives from the contemplation of animated nature, beyond what is to be derived from exploring the deepest recesses of the mineral kingdom.

The various structures that constitute the Animal and Vegetable Creation, are formed into one connected chain, rendered

by the vital spark, with which every part of it is endowed, the most perfect of the works of the Almighty, within the reach of our intellectual capacity. The consideration of it is boundless in extent, and every step we make in it increases our admiration of the Creator.

Sir Joseph Banks entered into, and endeavoured to promote the pursuits in which his friend John Hunter was occupied, with the same zeal as his own, and indeed they were nearly allied. He entered most warmly into the interests of this College, and continued, to the end of his life, to enrich our Collection with the most valuable specimens of Natural History.

He came forward upon all occasions to serve his King and Country—in the Board

of Trade, in the affairs of New South Wales, and of the Mint ; in the management of the King's Marino Sheep and Botanical Gardens. He devised means for carrying the bread fruit to the West Indies from New South Wales, and the mango from Bengal ; the fruits of Persia and Ceylon to the West Indies and Europe ; all of which were attended with success.

On none of these occasions would he receive any remuneration, considering that the services of every man of independent fortune were to be always ready, when his country required them, and should be given free of all reward.

He carried this so far, as to chuse a Lizard for his Crest, as the animal that is most useful, living on insects,

but in no way destroying the food of man.

So great an admirer was John Hunter of Sir Joseph Banks's character, as to say, that if any man was to be envied, it was he ; for he was engaged in the most rational pursuits that can occupy the mind of man ; his income enabled him to carry it on without embarrassment ; the sublimity of its nature, and the vastness of its extent, made it impossible for him to tire, or be out of employment.

The income of his fortune was expended in the promotion of science, and the encouragement of scientific men ; and as that income from time to time was increased, he enlarged the scale of his expenditure. He opened his Library, the best which has been formed in books of Natural History,

to every one engaged in scientific pursuits, desirous of consulting it ; he had meetings at his house, but it was not the titled and the wealthy whom it was his object to bring together ; it was to form a Society of men pursuing Science, and to bring forward the rising generation, by encouraging in them the same pursuit, and shewing to them examples by which they ought to be guided. He told the Conservator of the Museum of this College, that he was better pleased to see him at these meetings than the first Duke of the land ; because he was sure that a person in his situation would bring information, and carry away instruction.

For forty-two years, Sir Joseph Banks filled the Chair of the Royal Society, during which period he was esteemed the greatest

Patron of Science in Europe ; and surely every one, deeply conversant in the various branches of Natural Knowledge, of whom this country can boast so large a number, owes much to him ; for they have all been encouraged by his fostering hand, have been kept together as a band of brothers associated under him, allowed to draw upon his rich store of general knowledge, in the most liberal manner, whenever they were in want of supplies.

Here I should have closed this Oration, which has fully occupied the time allotted for it ; but cannot take my leave without expressing my sorrow, in which I am sure you will all partake, for the loss of another Member of this College, who had the honour of being one of our Professors, cut off while in the act of preparing the Lec-

tures which, in less than two months, he was to give in this Theatre.

When I tell you that he was amiable in his manners, kind in his disposition, sound in his judgment, matured in his Anatomical and Chirurgical Knowledge, by the experience of twenty-one years, as a lecturer in both these branches of Science; I shall have said more than enough to convince you of the greatness of the loss the College has sustained. *in The death of Mr. Wilson.*

There is another ground on which some now before me will drop a tear of regret upon his grave, as well as myself. He was the last teacher of Anatomy, in that Theatre in which we received our education, who had the advantage of listening to the oral instructions given by the founder, Dr. William Hunter.

